

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

MBFR-03 SAJ-01 RSR-01 /099 W

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R 271751Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2953

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK

SUBJECT: LIBERALS SCORE TWO STUNNING BY-ELECTION  
VICTORIES

REF: LONDON 8585

1. THE LIBERAL PARTY SCORED TWO STUNNING UPSET  
VICTORIES IN YESTERDAY'S (JULY 26) BY-ELECTIONS AT  
RIPON AND ISLE OF ELY (SEE REFTEL FOR BACKGROUND)  
TAKING SEATS HELD BY THE CONSERVATIVES SINCE 1945 AND  
UPPING THEIR OWN REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
FROM EIGHT TO TEN.

2. THE RESULTS AT RIPON, WITH FIGURES FOR THE 1970 GEN-  
ERAL ELECTION GIVEN IN PARENTHESES, WERE AS FOLLOWS:  
LIBERALS 13,902 - 43 PERCENT ( 4,583 - 13)  
CONSERVATIVES 12,956 - 41 PERCENT (21,211 - 61)  
LABOR 4,435 - 14 PERCENT ( 9,147 - 26)  
INDEPENDENT 690 - 2 PERCENT (-----)

THE RESULTS AT ELY WERE:

LIBERALS 17,390 - 38 PERCENT (-----)  
CONSERVATIVES 15,920 - 35 PERCENT (28,972 - 60)

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LABOR 12,153 - 27 PERCENT (19,366 - 40)

3. THIS DOUBLE VICTORY FOR THE LIBERALS IS A SHATTERING REBUFF TO BOTH MAJOR PARTIES, BUT ESPECIALLY TO THE GOVERNMENT. I REGARD IT AS THE CLEAREST INDICATOR YET OF POPULAR DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE, PARTICULARLY ITS INABILITY TO CONTROL INFLATION. AT THE SAME TIME, IT REVEALS THAT THE LABOR PARTY HAS MADE NO PROGRESS IN REGAINING THE CONFIDENCE OF THE ELECTORATE SINCE BEING TURNED OUT OF OFFICE IN 1970.

4. THE LIBERALS HAVE NO READILY IDENTIFIABLE POLICIES EXCLUSIVELY THEIR OWN, BUT THEY DO OFFER THE VOTERS A CHANCE TO REGISTER THEIR PROTESTS. EARLIER THIS YEAR, IT APPEARED THAT THE LIBERAL "REVIVAL" MIGHT BE RUNNING OUT OF STEAM, BUT IN THE WAKE OF ELY AND RIPON, BOTH MAJOR PARTIES WILL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH THE REALITY OF AN INCREASINGLY SERIOUS THIRD FORCE IN BRITISH POLITICS.

ANNENBERG

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 27 JUL 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973LONDON08700  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
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**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Line Count:** 82  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 73 LONDON 8585  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 31 JUL 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <31-Jul-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** LIBERALS SCORE TWO STUNNING BY-ELECTION VICTORIES  
**TAGS:** PINT, UK  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005